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PHOTO BY COSTUMED TEAM MEMBERS TAKING THE PLUNGE BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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Road Department to hold Red Arrow Highway Improvement Project public session

An informational session and construction schedule update for the Red Arrow Highway improvement project from Berrien Street to Lakeshore Road in Berrien County will take place from 6-7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at Chikaming Township Center, located at 13535 Red Arrow Highway in Harbert.

Representatives from the Berrien County Road Department will be present to provide an update on the project as well as answer any questions related to the project. Meeting topics will include road lane reconfiguration, non-motorized trail, 2025 anticipated project schedule, project impacts on traffic and more. Currently, the construction schedule anticipates the project beginning in late winter or early spring this year. The project will require road closure to through traffic during drainage and road reconstruction phases.

The format for the session will be an informational presentation by Berrien County Road Department with a follow up question and answer session.

Accommodations can be made for persons with disabilities and limited English-speaking ability. To make a request, contact the Road Department by phone at 269-925-1196 extension 4410 or by e-mail info@bcroad.org at least seven days before the meeting.— STAFF REPORTS

Hikers plan vernal pools-themed event

Vernal pools will be explored Saturday, Feb. 15, at the New Buffalo Schools Nature Study Trails as part of the next event of the Harbor Country Hikers.

The hike will begin at 1p.m. and will last about 2-1/4 hours. Amy Gillan, a Hikers member and Berrien County coordinator for the Vernal Pool Patrol, and Pat Fisher, president of the Hikers, will lead the hike.

Vernal pools are seasonal habitats essential to amphibians like salamanders and frogs, and to other species. Since the pools are not connected to other sources of water, they are largely free of predators that might otherwise prey on these animals as they grow into adulthood. As such, they are key to maintaining the population of these species.

The hike will include some off-trail excursions, and the trail may be muddy or icy, depending on the weather. Those who attend are encouraged to dress in layers, wear a warm cap and sturdy shoes or boots, and bring plenty of water.

Though membership of the Hikers is encouraged, all are welcome at this event and there is no cost to attend. For more information, including driving directions to the Nature Study Trails, visit the Hikers' website at www.harborcountryhikers.com, or its Facebook page. This hike is rated moderate to difficult.

— STAFF REPORTS

Self command is the greatest power of all.
— Dino N. Fatouros

GARDEN CLUB MEETING WILL INCLUDE FILM, POTLUCK LUNCH

The River Valley Garden Club will start the new year with their first meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 18, at Harbert Community Church, located at 6444 Harbert Road in Sawyer.

The meeting will start at noon with a Valentine potluck and then continue with a showing of the movie, "Greenfingers," starring Helen Mirren. Anyone with an interest in gardening is welcome to attend.

Additional activities open to the public include the two-day Gardening School, March 28 and 29. To attend, please register and pay in advance at migardenclubs.org. Registration is limited to 60 and closes March 1.

The garden club's signature plant sale will be May 17 this year and always draws a crowd as the first sign of spring.

For questions regarding events or membership, contact Elizabeth Palulis, evpalulis@yahoo.com, 269-362-4564 or visit rivervalleygardenclub.org.

The River Valley Garden Club has field trips, guest speakers, a member's plant auction, and hands-on workshops in addition to the annual plant sale and monthly meetings.

The club is also involved in service projects throughout the year. Members come from Indiana and throughout southwest Michigan. — STAFF REPORTS

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

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NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
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Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
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CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, ARTHUR ANDERSON
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM
VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER, JACK GRACE, ED SEBASTIAN, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

DDA supports South Whittaker Street Revitalization Project

DISCUSSES CITY FIREWORKS

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Improvements on South Whittaker Street and fireworks were the topics of discussion at a special meeting of the New Buffalo Downtown Development Authority Thursday, Jan. 30.

Members of the New Buffalo Downtown Development Authority approved sending a letter of support with regards to the city applying for a Revitalization and Placemaking grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for the South Whittaker Street Placemaking Project.

Council members approved the grant application at the January city council meeting. Per the council meeting's packet, the "scope of the project would be replacing the sidewalks, incorporating landscaping improvements and creating new on street parking."

Total project costs would be $416,406.25, with the city providing a 50 percent match.

Also mentioned in the packet from the city council meeting was that the former hardware store property, which is owned by the city, parallel to the railroad tracks is an "underutilized city asset that is well positioned to be developed to support parking needs during the community's busy season" and that a shuttle would "be able to easily move people between this new parking lot and the downtown and lakefront areas."

The packet also states that the redevelopment of South Whittaker has "long been a priority for the community highlighted in both the city's Master Plan as well as the draft Downtown Development Authority Tax Increment Financing Plan."

The grant submission was due that day, DDA Chair Ben Smock said.

Board member Chad Gradowski asked why the sidewalk indicated in the conceptual drawings stops at Whittaker Wine Merchants and doesn't extend to Clay Street.

City manager Darwin Watson said that the drawings are what's being proposed and that the city may not even get the grant.

"This is a concept of what it could look like – is this the final drawing? No," he said.

Concerned that the DDA hadn't been consulted during the planning process, Vice Chair Robert Kemper made a motion that the DDA sends a letter of support, with the understanding that they'll be involved in the planning process. Board members voted in favor of the motion, with Smock abstaining due to being a property owner in the affected area but adding that he'll be sending his own letter of support.

Smock said that the city approved awarding a three-year fireworks contract to R & R Pyrotechnics Fireworks, which did the 2024 show, for the following costs: $28,000 for 2025; $29,000 for 2026 and $30,000 for 2027.

Councilmembers approved the motion "with the contingency that the businesses commit to paying 50 percent of the $28,000 of the 2025 cost" and, if that doesn't happen, the city "will need to renegotiate the contract," per the September 2024 meeting minutes.

City councilmember Mark Robertson, who sits on the DDA Board, said that the almost $90,000 cost is a 50 percent increase over what's been charged the last few years.

In the past, Robertson said that the New Buffalo Business Association (NBBA) had gotten money from the businesspeople for fireworks, with The Pokagon Fund also assisting with funding.

Smock said that the NBBA used to run six major festivals per year, with an estimated annual budget of $250,000.

Harvest and Wine Festival had gotten too expensive to produce "without having significant sponsorship dollars to offset it," Smock said, adding that the costs for that festival had doubled since 2019.

"I will say, the business community at large, there's not a business case to be made for sponsoring the fireworks alone because the third of July is such a traffic nightmare for guests – a lot of people close early," he said, adding that the "traffic makes it difficult to do businesses with a regular customer."

Other factors include weather, as well as that visitors often come for the fireworks alone.

Emphasizing that he's "not suggesting that we cancel the fireworks or not do it, Smock said that, from a business scenario, recent discussions have involved possibly bundling a sponsorship for the fireworks with a city parking map. The common document that would identify free and paid parking for when the beach lot is full, "where a business could get value throughout the summer season."

Smock added that people are interested in sponsoring events, which was evident when it was announced the NBBA cancelled Harvest and Wine Fest last October.

Kemper suggested reaching out to New Buffalo Township with regards to the city and township "working together to provide fireworks for the community."

It was agreed that fundraising shouldn't end with getting half of the fireworks' expense but also to provide support for traffic and security.

Watson said that he's not certain the DDA can solicit donations as an entity toward the fireworks show and that checks to the city would need to come from individual businesses and not the DDA.

Let no one be willing to speak ill of the absent. *— Sextus Propertius*

Overhaul of downtown streetscapes in La Porte's future

BY STAN MADDUX

A roughly $30 million plan has been developed to replace much of the aging streetscapes in downtown La Porte.

Until the plan starts being implemented, solutions are being sought for funding the growing cost of maintaining the brick sidewalks, brick planters, trees and other streetscapes that were put in during the 1990s.

Craig Phillips, the city's director of community development and planning, said the streetscape replacement, once it begins at some point, will be paid for by the city through a combination of borrowed funds and grants.

He said the work will be done in phases as funds are available probably over a five-to-ten-year period within the district, which encompasses 140 parcels.

"It's a big area," he said.

The plan is heavily focused on replacing most of the bricks with less expensive and not as costly to maintain concrete.

For many years, property owners in the city's Business Improvement District have paid for maintenance from its annual $85,000 budget.

The funds are generated by a special assessment levied on their property tax bills.

However, the money is not going as far as it used to due to inflation and higher cost maintaining the streetscapes from the effects of time.

"That's nowhere near enough money to actually cover that maintenance," said Bert Cook, executive director of the La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership.

The options being explored range from increasing the tax levy and disbanding the district once its 10-year agreement with the city expires.

"We all want the same thing. Infrastructure that's in better shape and a sustainable plan and resources to maintain that over time," he said.

Already, a decision has been made not to fix any more of the 138 brick planters damaged when periodically struck by motor vehicles.

Beginning in the spring, two damaged planters along Lincolnway at Jackson and Michigan streets will be replaced with much shorter ones made from concrete.

For drivers, Phillips said the concrete planters will be like running over a standard sized street curb, with damage restricted to the plants.

"It's just not going to cost as much to repair. That's what a lot of cities are going to now," he said.

More perennials will also be planted to reduce the $30,000 expense paid for by the BID every spring.

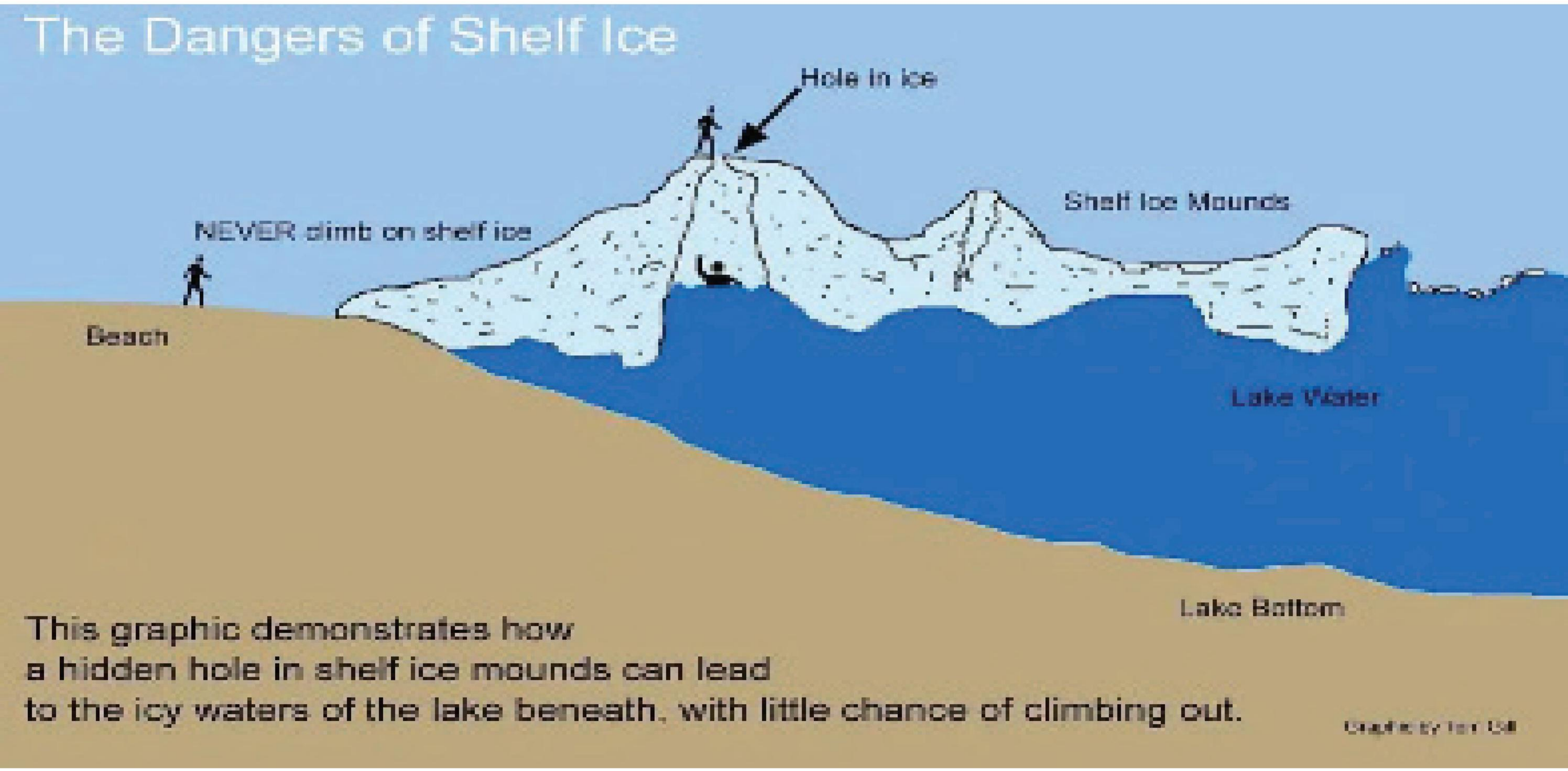
"The annual plantings are the largest single cost for the BID district. On top of that, when a planter is destroyed, the rebuilding of that is a cost that's extreme as well. That is outside of their budget," Cook said.

The plan calls for every planter to eventually be replaced and some of the brick sidewalks to be replaced and made from stamped concrete.

Cook said updates are also planned for the outdoor electrical system, which has many outlets that don't always work when needed for special events and lighting, especially during the holidays.

Other work includes replacing a number of trees put in along storefronts that have died from reaching their shorter lifespans.

"These are all issues that have to be addressed," he said.



This graphic demonstrates how a hidden hole in shelf ice mounds can lead to the icy waters of the lake beneath, with little chance of climbing out.

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SPORTS

From the Bleachers

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

The weekend before the Super Bowl is usually one of the most boring times in sport (unless you are a fan of the Chiefs or Eagles this year).

For the first weekend in about six months, there was no football game this weekend. The Bulls and Blackhawks are playing, but they want us to pay to watch their mediocre teams go through the motions while they make record profits and pay mediocre players insane amounts of money but refuse to even enter the bidding for superstars.

The model all of the major Chicago teams are currently using is eerily similar to the models Bill Wirtz used for the Blackhawks and Jerry Reinsdorf and Eddie Einhorn used for the White Sox, a model that alienated an entire generation of Blackhawks and White Sox fans and turned Chicago into a Bears, Cubs, and Bulls city.

Now, the Bulls and Cubs are following suit and the Bears are solidifying their grip on the city. This week the Bears hired a running backs coach and that fairly minor move took over the sports pages.

Why is football flourishing while baseball is having some troubles?

I believe that it all starts at the top. The last two commissioners of the NFL have been strong leaders who stayed firm in their beliefs of doing the best thing for the league. Because, along with the team owners, they stood firm against the players union and the lawyers/agents, all the star players are distributed pretty evenly around the league and there is a salary cap to make sure that competitive balance remains.

Baseballs' commissioners and owners, on the other hand, weren't as strong and have allowed agents and the union to dominate them. The players, even the not so good ones, are paid so much that ticket prices are through the roof. Because there is no salary cap, the Dodgers are willing to pay for all the best players. If the Dodgers don't, the Yankees or Mets will.

The Cubs could pay for some of those players, but they seem to be treating baseball as a business instead of a game. Without a salary cap, many small market teams just can't compete no matter how well their organizations are run, so eventually their fan base (unless their Cub fans) will probably erode.

Sunday, the Bulls finally traded Zach LaVine. LaVine was a gifted basketball player but injuries, a colossal contract, and the inability to lead the team into the playoffs made trading him a priority. The Bulls received three journeymen roll players in return, but more importantly, they are saving about one hundred million dollars. The salary relief that they have received can be used to acquire new free agents for next year. Fingers crossed.

William H. McRaven said "Sometimes no matter how hard you try, no matter how good you are, you still end up as a sugar cookie."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

Bison upset at home in conference hoops match

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School boys' basketball team on Friday, January 31 suffered an upset conference loss at home to Eau Claire, a team the Bison defeated by 29 points earlier in the season.

The 51-46 victory by the Beavers (4-11) broke an eight game road losing streak.

New Buffalo Head Coach Nate Tripp said Eau Claire is much improved since adding a standout freshman to the varsity squad and one other talented player to the roster.

"They've made some remarkable changes. They've really intensified their defense," he said.

Tripp said the loss was particularly costly because it dropped the Bison (11-7) to second place in their division of the Berrien Cass St. Joseph Conference.

Among the factors working against the New Buffalo was the hot three point shooting of junior Trevor James, who scored the first nine points for the Bison, turning ice cold.

James scored just two points the rest of the way on free throws.

The team's leading scorer for the season, 6'4" junior center Lucas Forker, also struggled with just 13 points.

There were few easy shots for Forker, who was double teamed on offense by two players of similar height.

Tripp said he knew the Beavers had improved and prepared his team for it but some of his players may not have taken their opponents as seriously as they should have going into the game.

"Overall, the body language and playing as a team and supporting each other just wasn't there," he said.

The Bison went into halftime with a six point lead after scoring the last seven points of the second quarter and were ahead by seven points mid-way through the third quarter.

After junior Sam Tripp blocked a shot, the momentum swung back to the Beavers, though, who quickly scored 10 of the next 12 points.

The Bison recaptured the lead when James threaded the needle with a pass to Forker, who laid the ball into the rim.

New Buffalo extended their lead to five points early in the fourth quarter when Tripp nailed a three point shot before junior James Shaw, after grabbing an offensive rebound, put the ball in off the glass.

Eau Claire took back the lead for good with 90 seconds left in the game.

Senior M'Nason Smothers was next in scoring for the Bison with 12 points.

Tripp said another factor in the loss could have been his players still being a bit emotionally drained after nearly pulling off a 21 point fourth quarter comeback against a very talented team from Phoenix High School in Kalamazoo earlier in the week.

It was the fourth loss in the last six games for the Bison, who began the season at 5-0.

"We're playing some good teams right now, but we're not playing our best basketball," he said.

Time is generally the best doctor. — *Ovid*

Bison rebound from recent losses on the hardwood

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School boys' basketball team came home with a 43-36 conference victory Tuesday night, Feb. 4, at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School.

Head Coach Nate Tripp said it was a good win for his recently struggling team.

"We were in control the whole game," he said.

The Bison, who were leading 20-15 at halftime, went up by 10 points in the fourth quarter.

Tripp said he was confident enough in his team's performance to give more court time to his players on the bench throughout the game.

"It was a really good team win," he said.

Trevor James led the Bison attack with 12 points followed by M'Nason Smothers with eight points.

Tripp said the team's recent struggles are from having to adjust to their opponents stacking defenders close to the rim to stop the inside game of center Lucas Forker, who's been less dominating in recent games.

Forker managed just seven points against the Lakers, who double teamed him with similar sized players.

Tripp said the players are going through some growing pains from trying to learn how to score more from the outside.

"We're going through that transition phase right now, which is very healthy for us. It's going to make us a more complete team and a team way more difficult to guard," he said.

FARM ANIMALS PERISH IN BARN FIRE

A number of farm animals were killed when a barn went up in flames early Tuesday morning in northern La Porte County.

The fire about 2:30 a.m. was in the 7200 block of N. Range Road, a few miles north of U.S. 20.

Kankakee Township Fire Chief Zach Rasiuk said a pig died in the roughly 600 square foot two story barn, which was fully engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived.

According to La Porte County Police, there were 30 chickens inside the barn along with five rabbits.

All of the animals were presumed dead because of a failed attempt to save the animals by residents awakened by their dog barking, who were driven back by the smoke and flames.

Rasiuk said all that remained of the building were exterior cinder block walls on the main level and parts of the charred wooden upper level of the structure along with some metal beams warped by the intense heat from the flames.

"There wasn't much left standing," he said.

A utility task vehicle and miscellaneous tools inside the barn were also destroyed.

Rasiuk said the fire started near an electrical panel on the opposite side of the barn from where the chickens were kept.

The house being a few hundred away from the barn was never threatened by the fire.

The cause of the fire was under investigation with help from the Indiana State Fire Marshal's Office. — STAN MADDUX

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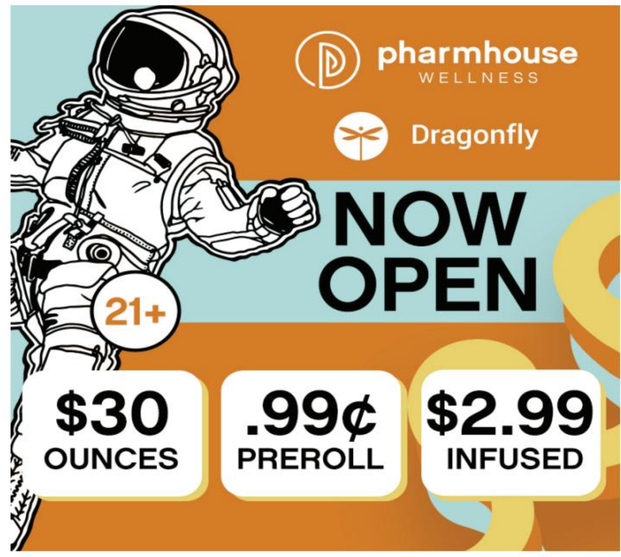

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Taking the plunge for a cause at Watermark Brewing Company

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Even though members of the Berrien County Sheriff's Office and New Buffalo Township Fire Department claim to be engaged in a "friendly" fundraising competition with each other during every Southwest Michigan Polar Plunge, they know that all the money is going to the same cause.

"It's a great opportunity to raise money for Special Olympics Michigan and we're happy to do it," Berrien County Sheriff Chuck Heit said.

He added that the full roster of teams included Berrien RESA, which had combined two teams this year.

This year's plunge, which took place Saturday, Feb. 1, at Watermark Brewing Company in Stevensville, surpassed its fundraising goal of $110,000 by raising $112,704.

New Buffalo Township Fire Chief Jamie Flick, the leader of the "Frost Fighters" team, said that this was the fire department's sixth year taking the plunge.

"Our team goal was $6,000 and we're almost at 10,000 so we did really well this year," he said Saturday morning.

According to its website, Polar Plunge is the biggest fundraiser for Special Olympics Michigan.

The plunge is presented by the Law Enforcement Torch Run, a movement of volunteers dedicated to increasing awareness and funds for Special Olympics Michigan athletes across the state.

The funds raised by plungers will help Special Olympics Michigan provide year-round training and services to over 23,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities across the state at no cost to them.

Meg Killips, who plunged with the New Buffalo City Police Department, said she's been plunging for the past five years.

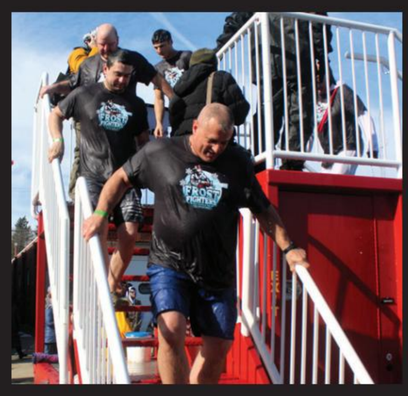
Since the sun was out, she said the Feb. 1 plunge was "refreshing" as opposed to if it had been a cloudy day.

Costumed team members prepare for the plunge

The SADD Wicked-themed team celebrates taking the plunge

Plungers descend the Plungester's stairs

Eva Bauer and Jane Funk, members of the SADD team, pose with Joe Funk, plunging with New Buffalo Township Fire Department



New Buffalo Township Fire Chief Jamie Flick descends the Plungester's stairs with the rest of the team

Minions descend the Plungester's stairs

Members of the Berrien County Sheriff's Office team in front of the Plungester

Plungers warm up before the plunge

The crowd gathers in front of Watermark

The New Buffalo Township Fire Department Frost Fighters team prepares to plunge

The New Buffalo Township Fire Department's Frost Fighters Team takes the plunge

Costumed members of teams dive into the Plungester

Teams after the plunge in front of the Plungester

Costumed team members descend the Plungester's stairs

Costumed team members dive into the Plungester

Costumed members of various teams took the plunge

"Everyone comes together, everyone's happy and joyful and it makes people happy too... When you do something for your community, you're giving back because you never know when you're going to need services," Killips said.

Plunging with Killips, a veteran plunger, and the police department were first-time plungers, members of "Wicked"-theme New Buffalo Middle/High School Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) group.

Nicole Bowen, who's the leader of SADD, said that they were encouraged to plunge by Brianna Schmitz, the school's school resource officer (SRO), who plunged with them that day.

"Brianna mentioned it to us because she's done it for many years, so she suggested to us to join her – so we just thought it was a good idea," she said.

The plunge aligns with SADD's service-oriented mission. While the group does activities at other times of the year, such as packing boxes at Christmas, Bowen said that January and February were lacking in projects.

Sophomore Riley Castle Brow said that she enjoys the camaraderie of SADD's activities.

"I'm plunging because it's supposed to be good for you to do and also, it's fun to do stuff as a group," she said.

Senior Jane Funk said that she and fellow senior, Eva Bauer, who just joined SADD that year, thought it'd be fun to join the plunge after Bowen told them about it.

Funk's father, Joe Funk, was plunging with the New Buffalo Township Fire Department.

"He's kind of influenced me to do it – he's plunged for the past two years," she said.

Teacher Thomas Kreiger, who was also plunging with the group, said he was experiencing some regret ahead of the plunge.

He was still going through with it, though.

"The excitement has been slowly turning to dread now that we're here because now I have to subject myself to freezing temperature - but I think I've prepared as best I could for it mentally," Kreiger said.

This year, Special Olympics Michigan planned to host more than 28 Polar Plunge events throughout the state, with the goal of raising more than $1.6 million by March 31. More information can be found at www.somi.org.

All marijuana dispensary advertising could be outlawed in Indiana

BY STAN MADDU

State lawmakers in Indiana, where marijuana is still against the law, are now targeting all forms of advertising for marijuana and marijuana dispensaries in states like Michigan, where the retail sale of the drug is legal.

The latest proposal in the Indiana House prohibits advertising a product containing marijuana or a marijuana business by any medium within the state.

A previous bill introduced to House lawmakers outlaws billboards that advertise marijuana or a marijuana dispensary within 1,000 feet of certain places, such as interstates and state highways.

State Rep. Jim Pressel of Rolling Prairie said he supports both measures.

"Should we be advertising it and making it look like it's a legal here? I don't believe that is good policy," he said.

Pressel said the flood of billboards advertising marijuana on major Indiana roads, such as Interstate 94 and Indiana 39, is bad enough.

Now, Pressel said there are pamphlets and other forms of literature from marijuana dispensaries that Indiana residents are receiving in the mail.

"They're actually sending out mailers. We need to get in front of that," he said.

Recently, a truck containing a large sign advertising a dispensary outside the New Buffalo city limits has parked on multiple occasions in downtown La Porte along Indiana 2.

Both proposals before the Indiana House Judiciary Committee for review and possible action call for the Indiana Attorney General's Office to seek civil penalties and other costs for violations.

"We need to hold somebody accountable for it," he said.

While it's too early to know if the proposals will be amended as they go through the legislative process, Pressel feels some type of marijuana advertising ban has a decent chance of being adopted.

"That will gain some traction," he said.

Pressel said advertising marijuana dispensaries and their products in Indiana is happening while people continue to be arrested here if caught with the drug legally purchased outside the state.

"We don't need to promote it to where consumers believe it is a legal substance. I just think that is unfair to everybody. We're addressing it. Hopefully, we'll get it across the finish line," he said.

The state legislature is in session this year until the end of April.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

A Writer's Life...

DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION ANIMATION

BY JACK OLESKER

The charming and sometimes irritating Frenchman...

The next morning I awaken to find my five story springboards slipped under my door. Jean circled the Deadly Jewels and Tut the Second story springboards. I'm pleased. Two out of five isn't bad.

I also see my latest script for The Littles – Twins. It'smarked up...heavily. Twins is my third script. But I feel like I'm always going one step forward, two steps back. Every time I get a script back from Jean, with Page One revisions, I have to re-type the entire script. (Again, this is the IBM Selectric III Typewriter Era.) I'm a fast typist and I can retype a script overnight. But it's not just 'typing'. Every revision means the dialogue or action that preceded and followed it has be changed so it all so all hangs together. No cut-and-paste, no Search and Replace or Edit functions. Can you imagine?!

I remind myself I signed on for this. I dive into the revisions, finishing the rewrite by eleven this night. I carry the script down the hall, bend and begin to slide it under Jean's door when Jean opens the door. He looks like he'sjust gotten back from a late dinner. After a brief greeting, he picks up the script and, French accent heavy from a long day, says, "You work fast. I give you that much."

Weary myself, and in no mood for levity, I say, "Is that how you talk to Jeffrey Scott?"

Jean's piercing eyes narrow and he answers, "You're not allowed to even mention Jeffrey Scott's name..--." Then he smiles a thin smile, my script in hand, adds, "-- ...yet" and closes his door. It ticks me off, but I turn and walk away.

The next day my brother calls from Chicago. He and my dad have just returned from a New York buying trip for their clothing stores. He says now that Dad has seen my name under episode titles on television, he started grabbing vendors at the convention with, "Let me tell you about my son the writer!" This from a man who once said I was "crazy to move to L.A. and bang my fingers on a keyboard."

Tom tells me that while they were in New York, they met with Citibank to try and close a quarter of a million dollars loan to buy spring inventory.

My father always harbored borderline hostility toward the college-educated, himself having barely graduated from high school. As an aside, he made up for his lack of formal education by voraciously consuming two or three novels a month.

On this day, as my brother relates the story, Tom and my dad are in the office of a young Citibank VP, my brother nervously glancing at framed diplomas on the wall from Wharton, Harvard Business School and Princeton. For the next half hour Tom listened to my father saying "Yes, Mr. Franklin", "No, Mr. Franklin" and "Of course, Mr. Franklin."

After they left the office and walked toward the elevators, Tom tells me when he shook his head in bewilderment, my dad asked, "What?" To which my brother answered with, "I know how you feel about college boys. I'm shocked how you handled that." He tells me our dad asked, "Did we get the loan?" When my brother says, "Yes," my father just grinned.

I nod. As I was long ago taught, sometimes you have to bite your tongue, whether in the clothing business or The Golden Age of Television Animation.

Jack Olesker's career in the entertainment industry spans over four decades. He has served as a story editor in L.A. as well as president of a motion picture and television company in Chennai, India. His writing ranges from Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, Care Bears and Hello Kitty's Furry Tale Theater to documentaries and horror novels and murder mysteries for adults.

HOROSCOPE

FEBRUARY 6-12, 2025

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

This is the week to refine your social sphere. Be choosier when it comes to who you let into your inner circle and avoid over sharing with people you don't know well. Rather than hash out details publicly, let things go privately. Converse with your inner dialogue; that's the one you need to deal with.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

This week is all about making hard choices and doing the hard work. If you want to advance in society or in your career, walk the walk and talk the talk. Meaning control your emotions and do the right thing. Don't create more blockages by trying to be tough or look a certain way.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Genuine interactions with people will be difficult and require hard work on you part this week. Listening to the information and comprehending the ideas that other people carry are integral to successfully completing projects. Say what you need to but be prepared to hear some hard truths.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

People might push your buttons this week. But if you want things to work out with them, then you better come prepared. That means knowing details, bringing materials and sharing ideas in simple language. Also, it is imperative to know your value and not shy away from sharing it.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

There is a lot to take in this week with outside influences and social happenings. Don't get caught up in stereotypes or personal prejudices. Be more critical. If you want to help others, take time to learn about what they truly need and want. Get to know people before doing things for them.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

It is important to release outside influences and rely on your own strengths and principles. There are some hard choices that need to be made when it comes to controlling partners and those you work closely with. This is the time to do those tough jobs on your own. Trust in your abilities.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

If you want love and excitement in your life, then start creating a happier atmosphere by doing the things that make you happy. When you start doing the things you love, you become lighter and more radiant. Don't block your light by trying to be or do things you don't like or want.

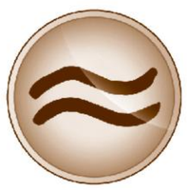
SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

There may be some difficult changes or cuts that need to be made to your schedule this week. Try staying close to home and accomplishing the tasks you see as more difficult or time consuming there rather, then traveling or visiting with friends. Be more task oriented for the betterment of your home.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

Being kind and soft spoken will go a long way now. Dealing with partners can be challenging now and it is important to be very honest. Which on the surface seems easy but what you're feeling or doing may prove consequential to the relationship. Honesty is hard but crucial.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



This is not the time to rest on your laurels or be complacent. The energy coming your way this week requires hard work and hard choices in order to reap the big rewards. Rather than letting the stars do their thing, harness this energy and direct it to the areas of your life that need the work.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

Secrets carry consequences and can weigh down interactions that have the propensity to bring you success. See the value in opening up and giving your honest perspective. Freedom comes from truly knowing the self and staying true to that. Cut the holding back and be more forthright.

The training of children is a profession, where we must know how to waste time in order to save it. — *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

			3					2
7		4	8			5		
		1			2		7	
9						8	3	1
							5	
		7		4		9		
4	7			8				
		2	9	5				
		8						

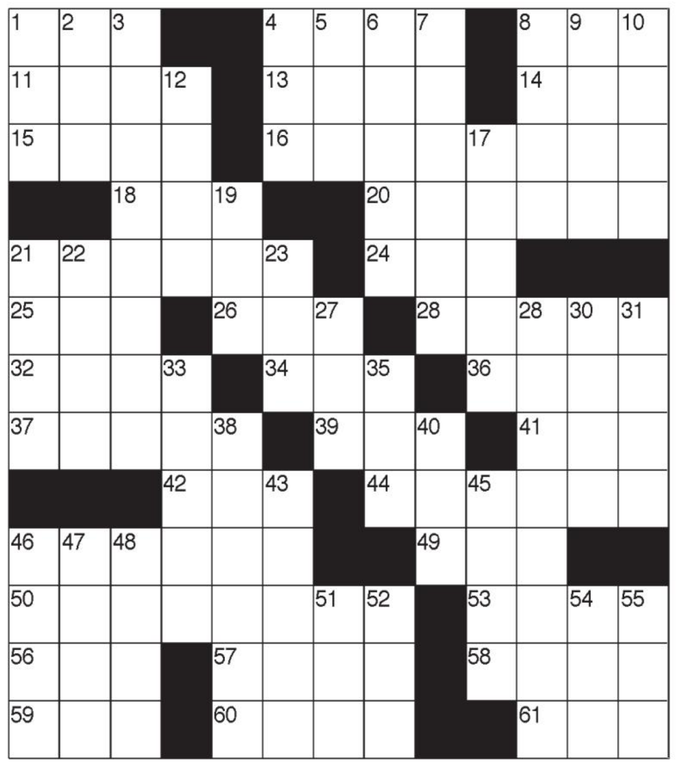
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Accomplished
4 Ammunition
8 Unfavorable
11 Original sinner
13 Spurt
14 Here (Fr.)
15 Ottoman peasant
16 Fr. month
18 Banned pesticide
20 Charm
21 Parent of Agamemnon
24 Nothing
25 Spelling contest
26 Sheep's cry
28 State (Ger.)
32 Winglike
34 Uncouth person
36 Pelvic bones
37 Phil. island
39 Field
41 Cetacean
42 Hebrew letter
44 Gastropod
46 Butterfly
49 No (Scot.)
50 Asian
53 Academy (abbr.)
56 Antiaircraft artillery (abbr.)
57 Nipa palm
58 Southern France
59 Pounds (abbr.)
60 Cant
61 Ambassador (abbr.)

DOWN

1 Daughters of the American Revolution (abbr.)
2 Mountain on Crete
3 Reverie
4 Signed (abbr.)
5 Color
6 Ancient Italian
7 One of the Twelve Titans
8 Bibliography (abbr.)
9 Land measure
10 Legislature
12 Created
17 Many times more than (pref.)
19 Cask
21 Down with (Fr., 2 words)
22 Web
23 Skin vesicle
27 Mulberry of India
29 Baldness
30 Irish nobleman
31 Diplomacy
33 Fiber plant
35 Ancient stringed instrument
38 Of a reign
40 Own (Scot.)
43 Prairie copse
45 Lady's title
46 Ember
47 Saracen
48 Geological epoch
51 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
52 Licensed practical nurse (abbr.)
54 Admiral (abbr.)
55 Fish with bait on the surface



OBITUARIES

Alice Harriet Vacanti

1941-2025

Alice Harriet Vacanti, 82, of Watervliet, died, Saturday, January 25, 2025.

Her life began August 16, 1941 in Coloma, Michigan, the middle of nine children born to Norman and Barbara Carrothers.

Alice was a wonderful sister. She was kind and considerate to everyone she met. Alice was an avid member of the Catholic Church in Watervliet. She loved photography and took many pictures of sunsets and Lake Michigan.

Alice will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by one granddaughter, Roslyn (Michael) Howell of Monroe, North Carolina, two great-grandchildren, Calee and Emma; one sister, Alexis (Jack) Renbarger of Three Oaks and a host of lifelong friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; one daughter Dawn Vacanti, one sister, Diane Savage two, Robert Carrothers and Douglas Carrothers and beloved pet Nitro.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online at www.wagnercares.com.

DEATH NOTICES

THREE OAKS – Jeffery Herman Childs, 79, of Pullman, Michigan, passed away on Tuesday, February 4, 2025. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks

To Your Health

COLUMN BY KAREN EDWARDS ND

HEALING MEDICINES FROM PLANTS

My professor, the late great Dr. John Christopher said that every community should have a Master Herbalist and every home should have a Family Herbalist.

Plants are harvested and cultivated for harnessing their nutritional and medicinal qualities. In the times that we are in, it is to your advantage to learn as much as you can about plant medicine. Most modern drugs prescribed in the United States were originally derived from plants. Plant medicines were around long before modern medicines. Archeologists have found evidence of plants being used for medicine dating as far back as the Paleolithic era, more than 60,000 years ago! They always were, and always will be our food and medicine.

You do not have to spend thousands upon thousands of dollars and many years for higher education schooling to learn some herbal information that you can use yourself. Herbalism is available to anyone interested to learn right in your local library. You tube has many herbalists willing to share herbal recipes and give you explicit education on making tinctures, poultices, salves and herbal blends for all sorts of needs.

Follow me, and many other herbalists that offer Facebook entries full of educational information for your taking. You just have to want it. Some think that herbs are something you have to buy from a faraway herb shop formulated by a long haired, long bearded alchemist. Most of you possess many herbs right in your kitchen. Food as medicine.

A few of you have been to my classes "Kitchen Medicine Workshop" and walked away with a lot of knowledge to help yourself and your family with illness and injuries. Anyone that knows me, knows how excited I get about God's herbs and their healing powers. It has been a lifetime of education for me. Starting out as a child when I was very ill and the medical world could only offer shots the rest of my life and said I would never get well. Herbalism and Naturopathy eventually became my career, and educating others. There is no longer a stigmatism on Herbalists like there was when I began over 40 years ago. I was nicknamed Witch Doctor, Marie Laveau, Medicine woman, Alchemist and the one that has stuck around. "Herbdoc."

Today, much of the world's population utilizes herbalism for their health and well-being. People are seeking out Herbalists and Naturopath Doctors to find a better way to prevent disease and to avoid drugs and surgeries where they can.

Learning to use herbs in any capacity will be a huge benefit to your health. Herbs offer antioxidants that can help prevent cell damage and reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease and Alzheimer's. They are Anti-inflammatory which can help with chronic disease and cancer cell growth.

Using herbs in cooking will help with blood pressure, balance blood sugar, reduce your cholesterol and offer nutrients that are not available in processed food.

However, you choose to use your herbs, find a way to bring them into your diet.

Disclaimer: Nothing in these articles is meant to replace medical advice. If you are on medications, do not stop taking them. This is for educational purposes.

Karen Edwards is a board-Certified Dr. of Naturopathy, Master Herbalist, Vegan and Raw food Chef. She is owner of Holistic Alternatives in New Buffalo and La Porte for over 25 years.

Picture of boy with gun leads to mom's arrest

A picture on social media of a Michigan City boy posing with a handgun resulted in the discovery of drugs and badly malnourished dogs in the home.

Those are among the allegations filed against the boy's mother, Erica Cooper.

Cooper, 33, is charged in La Porte Superior Court 1 with Level 2 felony dealing in a schedule I, II, III substance; Level 3 felony possession of cocaine or a narcotic drug; unlawful carrying of a handgun, theft of a firearm and neglect of a dependent, all Level 5 felonies and Class A misdemeanor abandonment or neglect of an animal.

According to court documents, police went to her residence in the 1800 block of Kentucky Street after learning about the photo of the child, which was posted recently on Snapchat.

Police said there were illegal narcotics and drug paraphernalia in plain view.

During a search, evidence of alleged drug dealing, such as 37 grams of cocaine, along with empty sandwich bags and scales were found in the home, authorities said.

The pistol held by the boy in the picture and several more firearms, including a shotgun that was reported stolen in Virginia, were also seized, according to court documents.

Police said the search continued in the basement, where three severely underweight dogs were discovered in cages with no food or water.

The dogs were taken from the home, police said.

According to court documents, the investigation shows Cooper left her three children home alone on Jan. 24 to go to Indianapolis.

The boy told officers he knew where his mother kept the firearms and grabbed one of the guns to pose for the social media picture to protect himself since no adult was in the home at a time he was being threatened by individuals.

Police said it was illegal for Cooper to have a gun because of a prior felony conviction.

Cooper told police the cocaine and most of the guns belonged to other people, according to court documents.

She could face anywhere from a 10 to 30 year sentence on the most serious count. — **BY STAN MADDUX**

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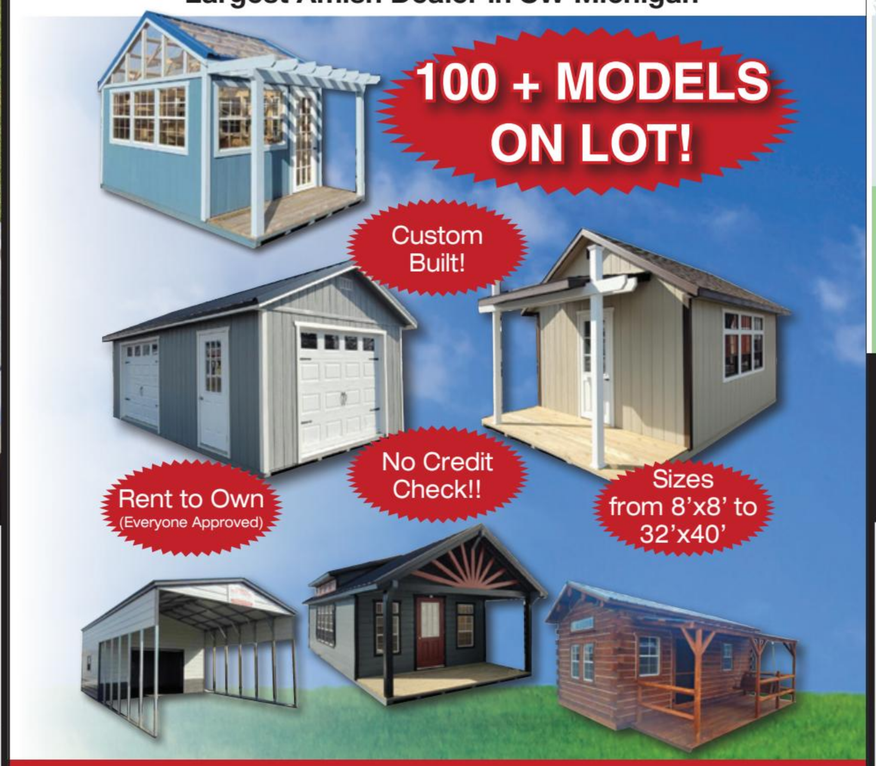

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Accidental shooting of toddler brings charges

BY STAN MADDUX

Charges have been filed in connection with a 2-year-old boy finding a gun and shooting himself in the thumb.

Tyler Woods, 27, of Michigan City is charged in La Porte Superior Court 1 with neglect of a dependent as a Level 3 felony.

According to court documents, Woods in late October went to a home in Trail Creek to watch several children belonging to family members who were out of town.

The investigation shows he left a loaded handgun in the pocket of his jacket that he removed and placed in the corner of a room, police said.

Police said Woods told investigators he was in the kitchen getting ready to fix pork chops for dinner when he heard the gun fire once.

He and another woman took the child shot in the right thumb to a hospital.

After finding the gun, it appears the boy removed the weapon from the unzipped pocket of the jacket and fired it, police said.

Woods could face anywhere from a three to 16 year sentence.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Please join our New Buffalo American Legion Women's Auxiliary in collecting donations for Blue Star Mothers of America. They are shipping care packages overseas to our active-duty members.

Examples of what they could use are: Toothbrushes/paste, floss, disposable razors, shaving cream in a squeeze tube, eye drops, hand lotion, chap stick, band aids, sunscreen, insect repellent, playing cards, word search, sudoku, and puzzle books, footballs, dominos, frisbees.

We are accepting monetary donations as well for the shipping costs. Checks for monetary donations can be made to: Blue Star Mothers of America, Chapter 177

Please drop off all donations by February 15th to: New Buffalo American Legion 19139 US-12 New Buffalo, MI 49117

Our Veterans appreciate you as do we.

Public Auction on February 15 th at Roger's wrecker 742 south Whittaker st in new buffalo Michigan 49117 . 2008 dodge avenger , 2014 Hyundai sonata , 2018 Chevy Malibu . Auction at 10 am

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PET OF THE WEEK

SABLE

Sable is about 9-month-olds, has a unique ombre-coloring to where sometimes she looks mostly grey, and in a different light, she looks more brownish-grey. Sable loves love, loves to play with her toys, and getting the "zoomies" is very entertaining. She is almost 60 pounds, spayed, and her vaccinations are up-to-date. Sable would thrive in a home where the children are older than eight, and she'd prefer to be the only pet in the house.

AVAILABLE AT THE MICHIANA HUMANE SOCIETY

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
New Buffalo Times
— SINCE 1942 —

6	9	5	3	7	4	1	8	2
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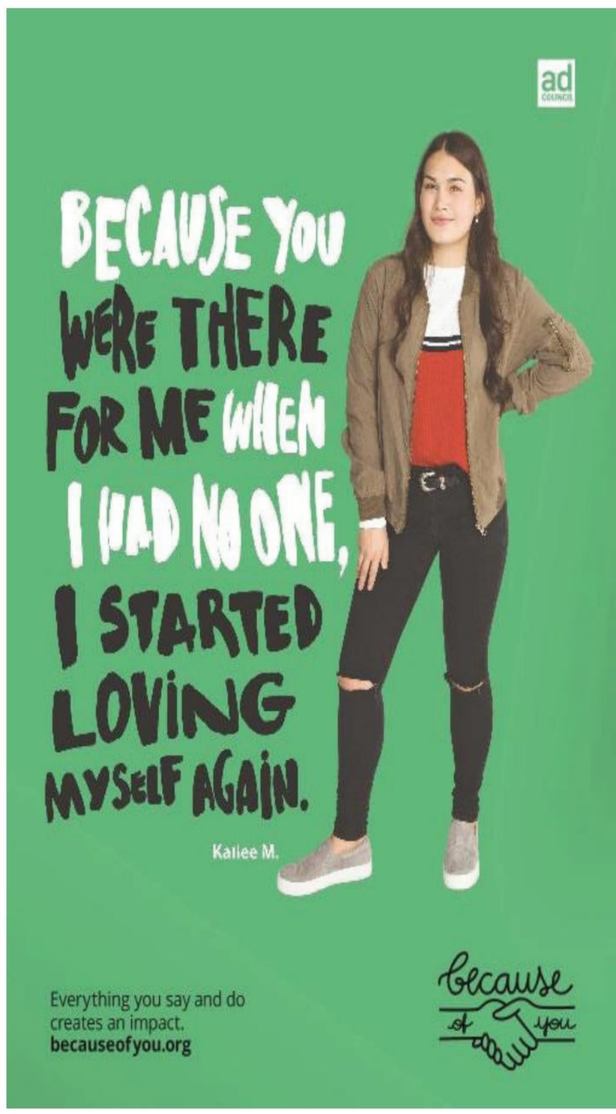
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Katiee M.
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Nicolina Holt's photographs are on display at The Acorn

Frank Kurland poses with his dreamscapes at The Acorn

Julie Schwarz stands by her Symphony of Polaroids

'A Retrospective' highlights artists at The Acorn

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

It was June 2023 when artist Frank Kurland was chosen to have his "dreamscapes" grace the walls of The Acorn Center for the Performing Arts in Three Oaks.

Since then, five other artists – Nicolina Holt, Chris Brown, Nathan Margoni, Amy Renzulli and Julie Schwarz – have joined him in spreading the word about the area's local artistry by displaying their work as part of the "Art at the Acorn" initiative.

The artists gathered at an open house-style reception, with several displaying new art, at The Acorn as part of "A Retrospective," Saturday, Feb. 1.

"A Retrospective" will be on display at The Acorn through March.

Kurland, who also helps with The Acorn's selection committee to choose the artists, said that the initiative has given local artists "exposure" for their work.

"They (The Acorn) are good at promoting, they're good at getting a following – there are a lot of people that I've met just today who have come to concerts and have seen the posters and said, 'We're coming back for that,'" Kurland said of having his work displayed.

Kurland, who works out of his Indiana studio, said his acrylic "dreamscapes" consist of sweeping paintings of landscapes and skyscapes.

Before devoting the last six years to his art, he worked in commercial art and advertising.

On another wall, Sawyer-based artist Schwarz has hung pictures as part of her "A Symphony of Polaroids."

Since her pictures are based off instruments as well as albums and 45 records, she felt that The Acorn was the perfect fit for her work.

"For a saxophone, I'll take six polaroid pictures of the saxophone, all different sections, and I trim off the border and puzzle it together - so it looks like a picture of the saxophone in segments all layered together," Schwarz said.

Her husband crafts the frames out of reclaimed wood from barn wood and driftwood.

The Acorn Senior Production Manager Michael Bond said he was pleased with the turnout for that afternoon's two-hour open house.

"We had no tickets for this, no ideas for who's coming - we kind of just opened the doors and let in a little more light than usual and we've seen 40 or so people come through the door," he said.

Bond said that artists can submit their work and, if it fits well with the initiative's parameters, they'll give them three months to display it.

As part of its mission, he said The Acorn usually latches onto performance-related acts that are on the horizon.

Amy Renzulli stands by her acrylic abstracts

"We're thought of as a music center and it is still 90 percent – that's our bread and butter and that's what people know us for and hear us for - but it's cool to be able to check some boxes...We do support local, visual artists – painters or sculptors," he said.

Bond said that Margoni, who displayed his "Golden Boy" series that features a series of drawings and acrylic paintings that feature a character named Golden Boy - who is part-golden retriever and part-human – currently has his artwork on display at The Box Factory in St. Joseph.

Holt was pleased to return to The Acorn to display her photography and mixed media pieces.

"I like working with The Acorn Theater - I like their commitment to the arts and the local community," she said.

An artist since high school, Holt said her work in "A Retrospective" features photographs that "touch on societal norms and how it can be constrictive to the new" as well as a "politically charged" mixed media piece.

Renzulli was also pleased to display more of her bright, colorful abstracts at The Acorn.

"It's kind of a great way to get immersed in the community and meet other artists," she said, adding that she's been to a lot of shows there.

A lifelong artist who comes from a family that's rooted in the arts, Renzulli said she mostly works in acrylics.

"I do a lot of hand printed tissue papers, and the tea bag paper is really strong - a lot of my stuff is layered and collaged," she said.

The Acorn considers interested artists for future rotation periods. Interested artists should fill out an Art at The Acorn Artist Submission Form at www.acornlive.org/art-at-the-acorn.

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